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A COMEDY,
In Three Acts,
BY
THOMAS HOLCROFT.

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THE THEATRE-ROYAL
IN
COVENT-GARDEN.

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Agnes Miss E. BOLTON.

The Count's Vassals and Servants.

SCENE, *the Count's Castle in Andalusia.*

THE
FOLLIES OF A DAY.

A C T I.

SCENE,

A Room in the Castle.

FIGARO and **SUSAN**, discovered. (**SUSAN** seated in an Arm-Chair, and **FIGARO** measuring the Chamber with a Wand.)

Fig. **EIGHTEEN** feet by twenty-six,—good.

Sus. What art thou so busy about?

Fig. Measuring, to try if the bed our noble lord intends to give us will stand well here.

Sus. In this chamber!

Fig. Yes.

Sus. I won't lie in this chamber.

Fig. Why so?

Sus. I don't like it.

Fig. Your reason.

Sus. What, if I have no reason?—What, if I don't chuse to give my reason?—Thou know'st how our generous Count, when he by thy help obtain'd Rosina's hand, and made her Countess of Almaviva

during the first transports of love abolish'd a certain gothick right—

Fig. Of sleeping the first night with every bride.

Sus. Which, as Lord of the Manor, he could claim.

Fig. Know it?—To be sure, I do; or I would not have married even my charming Susan in his domain.

Sus. Tir'd of prowling among the rustick beauties of the neighbourhood, he return'd to the Castle,—

Fig. And his wife.

Sus. And *thy* wife.—(*Figaro* stares.)—Dost thou understand me?

Fig. Perfectly!

Sus. And endeavours, secretly, to re-purchase from her a right, which he now most sincerely repents he ever parted with.

Fig. Most gracious penitent!

Sus. This is what he hints to me every instant; and this the faithful Basil, the honest agent of his pleasures, and our most noble music master, every day repeats with my lesson.

Fig. Basil!

Sus. Basil.

Fig. Indeed?—Well, if tough ashen plant, or supple-jack, twine not round thy lazy sides, rascal,—

Sus. Ha, ha, ha! Why, wert thou ever wise enough to imagine that the portion the Count intends to give us, was meant as a reward for thy services?

Fig. I think, I had some reason to hope as much.

Sus. Lord, lord! What great fools are you men of wit!

Fig. I believe so.

Sus. I'm sure so.

Fig. Oh, that it were possible to deceive this arch

deceiver, this lord of mine! A thousand blundering boobies have had art enough to filch a wife from the side of her sleeping, simple, unsuspecting spouse; and, if he complain'd, to redress his injuries with a cudgel:—But, to turn the tables on this poacher, make him pay for a delicious morsel he shall never taste, infect him with fears for his own honor, and—

Sus. (*A bell rings.*) Hark! My lady rings:—I must run; for she has several times strictly charg'd me to be the first person at her breakfast the morning of my marriage.

Fig. Why the first?

Sus. The old saying tells us, that it's lucky to a neglected wife, to meet a young bride on the morning of her wedding-day. [Exit SUSAN.

Fig. Ah, my sweet girl!—She's an angel! Such wit! Such grace! and so much prudence and modesty too!—I'm a happy fellow!—So Mr. Basil! Is it me, rascal, you mean to practise the tricks of your trade upon?—I'll teach you to put your spoon in my milk.—But hold!—A moment's reflection, friend Figaro, on the events of the day:—First, thou must promote the sports and feastings already projected, that appearances may not cool, but that thy marriage may proceed with greater certainty; next, thou must—Ha! here again?

Enter SUSAN.

(*With a Gown, Cap and Ribband, of the Countess's in her hand.*)

Sus. It wasn't my lady's bell: she has left her room.—Methinks, Figaro, you seem very indifferent about our wedding. Why aren't you gone, to summon the bride-men and maids?—And

what's become of your fine plot to be reveng'd on my lord?

Fig. I'll away this moment, and prepare every thing. 'Pr'ythee, my Susan, give me one kiss, before I go; 'twill quicken my wits, and lend imagination a new impulse.

Sus. O, to be sure!—But, if I kiss my lover to-day, what will my husband say to me to-morrow? (*Seems to refuse, as Figaro kisses her.*) Pshaw, Figaro!—when wilt thou cease to trifle thus from morning till night?

Fig. When I may trifle from night till morning, sweet Susan. [Exit Figaro.]

Sus. Ah, Figaro, Figaro! if thou provest but as loving a husband as thou art a fond lover, thou'l never need fear the proudest lord of them all.—I declare, I forget what I came for.

(*Susan puts the Gown on the Arm-chair; but keeps the Cap and Ribband in her hand.*)

(*The PAGE without.*)

Page. Thank you, thank you, Figaro:—I shall find her.

Enter PAGE, running.

Sus. So, master Hannibal!—What do you want here?

Page. O, my dear, dear, pretty, Susan!—I have been looking for you these two hours.

Sus. Well, what have you to say to me, now you have found me?

Page. (*Childishly amorous.*) How does your beauteous lady do, Susan?

Sus. Very well.

Page. (*Poutingly.*) Do you know, Susan, my

lord is going to send me back to my pappa and mamma ?

Sus. Poor child !

Page. Child indeed !——Uumph !——And, if my charming god-mother, your dear lady, cannot obtain my pardon, I shall soon be depriv'd of the pleasure of your company, Susan.

Sus. Upon my word !—You are toying all day long with Agnes, and fancy yourself, moreover, in love with my lady, and then come to tell me, you shall be depriv'd of my company —Ha, ha, ha !

Page. Agnes is good natur'd enough to listen to me ; and that is more than you are, Susan ; for all I love you so.

Sus. Love me !—Why, you amorous little villain, you are in love with every woman you meet.

Page. So I am, Susan, and I can't help it.—If no-body is by, I swear it to the trees, the waters, and the winds; nay, to myself. O, how sweet are the words woman, maiden, and love in my ears !

Sus. Ha, ha, ha !—He's bewitch'd — And what is the Count going to send you from the Castle for ?

Page. Last night, you must know, he caught me with Agnes, in her room :—— Begone, said he, thou little——

Sus. Little what ?

Page. Lord !—he called me such a name, I can't for shame repeat it before a woman.—I dare never meet his face again.

Sus. And, pray, what were you doing in Agnes's room ?

Page. Teaching her her part.

Sus. Her part ?

Page. Yes ; the love scene, you know, she is to act in the comedy this evening.

Sus. (*Aside.*) Which my lord would choose to teach her himself.

Page. Agnes is very kind, Susan.

Sus. Well, well, I'll tell the Countess what you say:—But you are a little more circumspect in her presence.

Page. Ah, Susan, she is a divinity! How noble is her manner! Her very smiles are awful!

Sus. That is to say, you can take what liberties you please with such people as me.

Page. O, how do I envy thy happiness, Susan! Always near her! Dressing her every morning! Undressing her every evening! Putting her to bed! Touching her! Looking at her! Speaking to—What is it thou hast got there, Susan?

Sus. (*Counterfeiting the extravagant tone of the Page.*) It is the fortunate ribband of the happy cap, which at night enfolds the auburn ringlets of the beauteous Countess.

Page. Give it me:—nay, give it me:—I will have it.

Sus. But, I say, you shan't.—(*The Page snatches it, and runs round the Arm-chair, dodging Susan.*) O, my ribband!

Page. Be as angry as thou wilt, but thou shalt never have it again; thou shouldst have one of my eyes rather.

Sus. I can venture to predict, young gentleman, that three or four years hence, thou wilt be one of the most deceitful veriest knaves—

Page. If thou dost not hold thy tongue, Susan, I'll kiss thee into the bargain.

Sus. Kiss me!—Don't come near me, if thou lov'st thy ears.—I say, beg my lord to forgive you, indeed! No, I assure you.

(*The Count without.*)

Alm. Jaquez,—

Page. Ah! I'm undone!—'Tis the Count himself, and there's no way out of this room.—Lord, lord! what will become of me? (*The Page crouches down, and hides himself behind Susan and the Arm-chair.*)

Enter Count ALMAVIVA.

(*Page remains behind the Arm-chair.*)

Alm. So, my charming Susan, have I found thee at last? But, thou seem'st frighten'd, my little beauty.

Sus. Consider, my lord, if any body should come and find you here,—

Alm. That would be rather mal-a-propos; but there's no great danger.

(*The Count offers to kiss Susan.*)

Sus. Fie, my lord!

(*The Count seats himself in the Arm-chair, and endeavours to pull Susan on his knee.*)

Alm. Thou know'st, my charming Susan, the king has done me the honour to appoint me ambassador to the court of Paris. I shall take Figaro with me, and give him a very—*excellent* post; and, as it is the duty of a wife to follow her husband, I may then be as happy as I could wish.

Sus. I really don't understand you, my lord. I thought your affection for my lady, whom you took so much pains to steal from her old guardian, and for love of whom you generously abolish'd a certain vile privilege,—

Alm. For which all the young girls are very sorry,—are they not?

Sus. No, indeed, my lord:—I thought, my lord, I say,—

Alm. 'Pr'ythee, say no more, my sweet Susan; but promise thou wilt meet me to-night in the garden; and be certain, if thou wilt but grant me this small favour, nothing thou canst ask shall ever—

(*Basil without.*)

Bas. He is not in his own apartment.

Alm. Heavens! Here's somebody coming, and this infernal room has but one door. Where can I hide? Is there no place here?

(*The Count runs behind the Arm-chair: Susan keeps between him and the Page, who steals away as the Count advances, leaps into the Arm-chair, and is covered over with the Countess's gown by Susan.*)

Enter **BASIL**.

Bas. Ah, Susan, good-morrow!—Is my lord the Count here?

Sus. Here? what should he be here for?

Bas. Nay, there would be no miracle in it, if he were:—Would there? Hey, gentle Susan?

(*Smiles and leers at her.*)

Sus. It would be a greater miracle, to see you honest.

Bas. Figaro is in search of him.

Sus. Then, he is in search of the man who wishes most to injure him,—yourself excepted.

Bas. It is strange, that a man should injure the husband by obliging the wife.

(*The Count peeps from behind the Arm-chair.*)

Alm. I shall hear now how well he pleads my cause.

Bas. For my part, marriage being, of all serious things, the greatest farce, I imagin'd—

Sus. All manner of wickedness.

Bas. That, though you are oblig'd to fast to-day, you might be glad to feed to-morrow, grace being first duly said.

Sus. Be gone, and don't shock my ears with your vile principles.

Bas. Yes, my pretty Susan; but you must not suppose, I am the dupe of these fine appearances: I know, it isn't Figaro who is the great obstacle to my lord's happiness; but a certain beadle's Page, whom I surpris'd here yesterday looking for you, as I enter'd.

Sus. I wish you'd be gone, you wicked—devil.

Bas. Wicked devil! Ah, one is a wicked devil for not shutting one's eyes.

Sus. I wish you'd be gone, I tell you.

Bas. Wasn't it for you that he wrote the song, which he goes chaunting up and down the house at every instant?

Sus. O, yes, for me,—to be sure!

Bas. I'm sure, it was either for you, or your lady.

Sus. What next?

Bas. Why, really, when he sits at table, he does cast certain very significant glances tow'rd a beauteous Countess, who shall be nameless:—But let him beware! If my lord catches him at his tricks, he'll make him dance without musick.

Sus. Nobody, but such a wicked creature as you, could ever invent such scandalous tales to the ruin of a poor youth, who has unhappily fallen into his lord's displeasure.

Bas. I invent? Why, it's in every body's mouth.

(*The Count discovers himself, and comes forward.*)

Alm. How? in every body's mouth!

Bas. Zounds!—

Alm. Run, Basil:—let him have fifty pistoles and

a horse given him, and be sent back to his friends instantly.

Bas. I'm very sorry, my lord, that I happen'd to speak of—

Sus. O, O,—I'm quite suffocated.

(*Susan seems ready to faint, the Count runs and supports her.*)

Alm. Let us seat her in this great chair, Basil:—quick, quick,—

Sus. (*Is frightened, and exclaims.*) No, no!—I won't sit down:—I always faint best standing.—(*After a pause.*)—This wicked fellow has ruin'd the poor boy.

Bas. I assure you, my lord, what I said, was only meant to sound Susan.

Alm. No matter; he shall depart: A little, wanton, impudent rascal, that I meet at every turning! No longer ago than yesterday, I surpris'd him with the gardener's daughter.

Bas. Agnes?

Alm. In her very bed-chamber.

Sus. Where my lord happen'd to have business himself.

Alm. Hem!—I was going there to seek her father Antonio, my drunken gardener: I knock'd at the door, and waited some time; at last Agnes came, with confusion in her countenance:—I enter'd, cast a look round; and, perceiving a kind of long cloak, or curtain, or some such thing, approach'd; and, without seeming to take the least notice, drew it gently aside, thus—Hey!

Bas. Zounds, Susan!—

(*The Count, during his speech, approaches the Alm-chair, and, acting his description, draws aside the gown that hides the Page. They all stand motionless with surprise, for some time.*)

Alm. Why, this a better trick than t'other!

Bas. Worth ten of it—No!—I won't sit down: I faint best standing. Ha, ha, ha!

Alm. And so, it was to receive this pretty youth, that you were so desirous of being alone.—And you, you little villain,—What, you don't intend to mend your manners then? But, forgetting all respect for your friend Figaro, and for the Countess your godmother likewise, you are endeavouring here to seduce her favourite woman! I, however, (*Turning towards Basil.*) shall not suffer Figaro, a man—whom—I esteem—sincerely—to fall the victim of such deceit. Did this imp enter with you, Basil?

Bas. No, my lord.

Sus. There's neither victim nor deceit in the case, my lord:—He was here, when you enter'd.

Alm. I hope, that's false: his greatest enemy couldn't wish him so much mischief.

Sus. Knowing that you were angry with him, the poor boy came running to me, begging me to solicit my lady in his favour, in hopes she might engage you to forgive him; but, was so terrified, when he heard you coming, that he hid himself in the great chair.

Alm. A likely story!—I sat down in it, as soon as I came in.

Page. Yes, my lord; but I was then trembling behind it.

Alm. That's false, again; for I hid myself behind it, when Basil enter'd.

Page. (*Timidly.*) Pardon me, my lord; but,—as you approach'd,—I retir'd, and crouch'd down, as you now see me.

Alm. (*Angrily.*) It's a little serpent that glides into every cranny.—And he has been listening too to our discourse!

Page. Indeed, my lord, I did all I could,—not to hear a word.

Alm. (*To Susan.*) There is no Figaro, no husband for you, however.

Bas. (*To Page.*) Somebody's coming:—Get down.

Enter the Countess, Figaro, Agnes, Pedro, and Servants, male and female, Figaro carrying the Nuptial Cap,—The Count runs and plucks the Page from the Arm-chair, as they enter.

Alm. What, would you continue crouching there before the whole world? (*The Count and Countess salute.*)

Fig. We're come, my lord, to beg a favour, which we hope, for your lady's sake, you will grant.—(*Aside to Susan.*) Be sure to second what I say.

Sus. (*Aside to Fig.*) It will end in nothing.

Fig. (*Aside to Sus.*) No matter; let's try, at least.

Countess. You see, my lord, I am suppos'd to have a much greater degree of influence with you than I really possess.

Alm. O no, madam; not an atom, I assure you.

Fig. (*Presenting the Cap to the Count.*) Our petition is, that the bride may have the honor of receiving from our worthy lord's hand this nuptial cap, ornamented with half-blown roses and white ribbands, symbols of the purity of his intentions.

Alm. (*Aside.*) Do they mean to laugh at me?

Countess. Let me beg, my lord, you will not deny their request; in the name of that love you once had for me.

Alm. And have still, madam.

Fig. Join with me, my friends.

Omnes. My lord!—my lord!

Alm. Well, well,—I consent.—(*Gives Susan the Cap.*) Remember the garden. (*Aside.*)

Fig. Look at her, my lord: never could a more

beauteous bride better prove the greatness of the sacrifice you have made.

Sus. O, don't speak of my beauty, but his lordship's virtues.

Alm. (Aside.) My virtues!—Yes, yes,—I see, they understand each other.

Agn. (Pointing to the Page.) Have you forgiven what happened yesterday, my lord?

Alm. (Afraid lest the Countess should hear, and chucking Agnes under the chin.) Hush!

Fig. (To the Page.) What's the matter, young Hannibal the brave? What makes you so silent?

Sus. He's sorrowful, because my lord is going to send him from the castle.

Omnes. O, my lord!—

Countess. Let me beg you will forgive him.

Alm. He does not deserve to be forgiven.

Countess. Consider, he is so young,—

Alm. (Half aside.) Not so young, perhaps, as you suppose.

Page. My lord certainly has not ceded away the right to pardon.

Sus. And, if he had, that would certainly be the first he would *secretly* endeavour to reclaim. (*Looking significantly at the Count and Figaro.*)

Alm. (Understanding her.) No doubt: no doubt.

Page. My conduct, my lord, may have been indiscreet; but I can assure your lordship, that the least word shall never pass my lips—

Alm. (Interrupting him.) Enough, enough:—Since every body begs for him, I must grant:—I shall moreover give him a company in my regiment.

Omnes. O, my lord!—

Alm. But on condition, that he depart to-day, for Catalonia to join the corps.

Omnes. O, my lord!—

Fig. To-morrow, my lord——?

Alm. To day.—It shall be so. (*To the Page.*) Take leave of your god-mother, and beg her protection. (*The Page kneels to the Countess with a sorrowful air. As he approaches to kneel, he goes very slowly, and Figaro gently pushes him forward.*)

Fig. Go, go, child; go.

Countess. (*With great emotion.*) Since—it is not possible—to obtain leave—for you to remain here to day, depart, young man, and follow the noble career which lies before you.—Go, where fortune and glory call.—Be obedient, polite, and brave, and be certain we shall take part in your prosperity. (*Raises him.*)

Alm. You seem agitated, madam.

Countess. How can I help it, recollecting the perils to which his youth must be expos'd? He has been bred in the same house with me, is of the same kindred, and is likewise my god-son.

Alm. (*Aside.*) Basil, I see, was in the right.—(*Turns to the Page.*) Go; kiss Susan for the last time. (*Figaro intercepts the Page.*)

Fig. No, there's no occasion for kissing, my lord; he'll return in the winter; and, in the mean time, he may kiss me.—The scene must now be chang'd my delicate youth: you must not run up stairs and down into the women's chambers, play at hunt-the-slipper, steal cream, suck oranges, and live upon sweetmeats.—Instead of that, Zounds! you must look bluff; tan your face; handle your musket; turn to the right; wheel to the left; and march to glory:—That is, if you're not stopt short by a bullet.

Sus. Fie, Figaro.

Countess. (*Terrified*) What a prophecy!

Fig. Were I a soldier, I'd make some of them

scamper.—But come, come, my friends; let us prepare our feast against the evening.

Alm. Well, much diversion to you all, my friends.
(*Going.*)

Countess. You will not leave us, my lord?

Alm. I am undrest, you see.

Countess. We shall see nobody but our own people.

Alm. I must do what you please.—Wait for me in the study, Basil. I shall make out his commission immediately.—(*Exeunt all but Figaro and Page.*)

Fig. (*Retains the Page.*) Come, come; let us study our parts well for the Play in the evening: I dare say, you know no more of your's, than Agnes does of her's.

Page. You forget, Figaro, that I am going.

Fig. And you wish to stay? (*In the same sorrowful tone*)

Page. (*Sighs.*) Ah, yes!

Fig. Follow my advice, and so thou shalt.

Page. How, how?

Fig. Make no murmuring, but clap on your boots, and seem to depart; gallop as far as the farm, return to the castle on foot; enter by the back way; and hide yourself, till I can come to you, in the lodge at the bottom of the garden: you will find pretty Agnes thereabouts.

Page. Ay, and then I may teach her her part, you know.

Fig. Yes, you have no objection to that, I suppose.

Exeunt, jesting with each other.

A C T II.

SCENE,

The Countess's Bed-Chamber.

[*The Bed in the back ground :—Chairs and Table :—A door of entrance into the Chamber ; another into Susan's Room ; and a third into the Countess's Dressing room :—A Window that looks into the Garden.*]]

The Countess seated, and Susan waiting, discovered.

Countess. SHUT the door.—And so, the Page was hid behind the great chair ?

Sus. Yes, madam.

Countess. But how did he happen to be in your room, Susan ?

Sus. The poor boy came, to beg I would prevail on you to obtain his pardon of my lord the Count.

Countess. But why did not he come to me himself ? I should not have refus'd him a favor of that kind.

Sus. Fashfulness, madam.—Ah Susan ! said he, she is a divinity ! How noble is her manner ! Her very smiles are aweful.

Countess. (Smiling.) Is that true, Susan ?

Sus. Can you doubt it, madam ?

Countess. I have always afforded him my protection.

Sus. Had you, madam, but seen him snatch the ribband from me !

Countess. (Rising.) Pshaw ! Enough of this nonsense.—And so, my lord the Count endeavours to seduce you, Susan ?

Sus. Oh, no indeed, madam, he does not give himself the trouble to seduce ; he endeavours to purchase me : and, because I refuse him, will certainly prevent my marriage with Figaro.

Countess. Fear nothing.—We shall have need, however, of a little artifice, perhaps; in the execution of which, Figaro's assistance may not be amiss.

Sus. He'll be here, madam, as soon as my lord is gone a coursing.

Countess. Your lord is an ungrateful man, Susan:—an ungrateful man:—(*The Countess walks up and down the room with some emotion.*) Open the window: I am stifled for want of air.—[*Susan opens the window.*]—Vows, protestations and tenderness are all forgotten:—My love offends, my caresses disgust:—He thinks his own infidelities must all be overlook'd; yet my conduct must be irreproachable.

Sus. (*Looking out of the window*) Yonder goes my lord with all his grooms and greyhounds.

Countess. To divert himself with hunting a poor, timid, harmless hare to death.—This, however, will give us time to—[*A knocking at the Chamber-door.*] Somebody is at the door, Susan. [*Susan goes singing and opens the door.*]

Enter FIGARO at the Chamber-door.

(*He kisses Susan's hand; she makes signs to him to be more prudent, and points to the Countess.*)

Countess. Well, Figaro, you've heard of my lord the Count's designs on your fair bride.

Fig. O, yes, my lady.—There was nothing very surprising in the news: My lord sees a sweet, young, lovely angel,—(*Susan curtsies.*)—and wishes to have her for himself. Can any thing be more natural? I wish the very same.

Countess. I don't find it so very pleasant, Figaro.

Fig. He endeavours to overturn the schemes of those who oppose his wishes; and in this he only follows the example of the rest of the world:—I will endeavour to do the very same by him:—And first, my scheme requires that you dress up the Page in

your cloaths, my dear Susan :—He is to be your representative in the design I have plotted.

Countess. The Page!

Sus. He is gone.

Fig. Is he?—Perhaps so:—But a whistle from me will bring him back. (*The Countess seems pleased.*)

Sus. So,—now Figaro's happy;—Plots and contrivances—

Fig. Two, three, four at a time! Embarrass'd, involv'd, perplex'd!—Leave me to unravel 'em. I was born to thrive in courts.

Sus. I've heard, the trade of a courtier is not so difficult as some pretend.

Fig. Ask for every thing that falls, seize every thing in your power, and accept every thing that's offer'd;—There's the whole art and mystery, in three words.

Countess. But, should my lord discover the dis-guis'd Page,—

Sus. He'll only give him a smart lecture; and that will do his boyish vanity no harm.

Countess. And, in truth, it deserves a little mortification.—Well, next for the Count, Figaro.

Fig. Permit me, madam, to manage him.—And first, the better to secure *my* property, I shall begin, by making him dread the loss of *his own*.—To which end, an anonymous letter must be sent, informing him, that a gallant, meaning to profit by his neglect and absence, is at present with his beauteous Countess:—And, to confess the truth, the thing is already done, madam.

Countess. How?—Have you dar'd to trifle thus with a woman of honor?

Fig. O, madam, it is only with a woman of honor I shculd presume to take a liberty like this; lest my joke should happen to prove a reality.

Countess. (*Smiles.*) You don't want an agreeable

excuse for your plot, Figaro.—(*To herself.*)—Though I hardly know how to give into it.

Fig. If you please, madam, I'll go and send the Page hither to be dress'd.—We must not lose a moment. [Exit FIGARO at the Chamber-door.

Countess. (*Examining her head dress in the Looking-glass.*) What a hideous cap this is, Susan! it's quite awry!—This youth who is coming—

Sus. Ah, madam, your beauty needs not the addition of art in his eyes.

Countess. I assure you, Susan, I shall be very severe with him.—I shall tell him of all the complaints I hear against him.

Sus. Oh yes, madam; I can see, you will scold him heartily.

Countess. (*Seriously.*) What do you say, Susan?

Sus. (*Goes to the Chamber door.*) Come, come in, Mister soldier.

Enter Page at the Chamber-door.

(*Susan pretends to threaten him by signs.*)

Page. Um—(*Pouts aside.*)

Countess. (*With a serious air.*) Well, young gentleman,—(*Aside to Susan.*) How innocent he looks, Susan!

Sus. And how bashful, madam!

Countess. (*Resuming her serious air.*) Have you reflected on the duties of your new profession?

(*The Page imagines the Countess is angry, and timidly draws back.*)

Sus. (*Aside to the Page.*) Ay, ay, young rake, I'll tell all I know.—(*Returns to the Countess.*) Observe his downcast eyes, madam, and long eye-lashes.—(*Aside to the Page.*) Yes, hypocrite, I'll tell.

Countess. (*Seeing the Page more and more fearful.*) Nay, Hannibal,—don't—be terrified;—I—Come nearer.

Sus. (*Pushing him towards the Countess.*) Advance, modesty.

Countess. Poor youth, he's quite affected.—I'm not angry with you; I was only going to speak to you on the duties of a soldier.—Why do you seem so sorrowful?

Page. Alas, madam, I may well be sorrowful, being, as I am, oblig'd to leave a lady, so gentle, and so kind,—

Sus. And so beautiful. (*In the same tone, and half aside.*)

Page. Ah, yes! (*Sighs.*)

Sus. (*Mimicking.*) Ah, yes!—Come, come, let me try on one of my gowns upon you:—Come here; let's measure:—I declare, the little villain is not so tall as I am.

Page. Um—(*Pouts.*)

Sus. Turn about;—let me untie your cloak.

(*Susan takes off the Page's cloak.*)

Countess. But, suppose, any body should come?

Sus. Dear my lady, we're not doing any harm:—I'll lock the door, however, for fear.—(*The Page casts a glance or two at the Countess: Susan returns.*) Well! Have you nothing to say to my beauteous lady, and your charming god-mother?

Page. (*Sighs.*) O, yes; that I am sure I shall love her as long as I live.

Countess. Esteem, you mean, Hannibal.

Page. Ye—ye—yes:—es-teem, I should have said.

Sus. (*laughs.*) Yes, yes,—esteem!—The poor youth overflows with es--teem and aff--ection,—and—

Page. Um! (*Aside to Susan.*)

Sus. Now, let us try whether one of my caps—

Countess. There's a close cap of mine lies on my dressing-table.—(*Exit Susan into the Dressing room of the Countess.*)—Is your commission made out?

Page. O, yes, madam, and given me :—Here it is.
(Presents his Commission to the Countess.)

Countess. Already ?—They have made haste I see :
 They are not willing to lose a moment :—Their hurry
 has made them even forget to affix the seal to it.

Re-enter SUSAN, with a Cap in her hand.

Sus. The seal?—to what, madam ?

Countess. His commission.

Sus. So soon !

Countess. I was observing, there has been no time
 lost. *(Returns the Page his Commission, he puts it in
 his girdle.)*

Sus. Come :—*(Makes the Page kneel down, and puts
 the Cap on him.)* What a pretty little villain it is ! I
 declare, I am jealous. See, if he is not handsomer
 than I am ! Turn about,—There :—What's here ?
 The ribband ?—So, so, so ! Now all's out. I'm
 glad of it.—I told my young gentleman, I would
 let you know his thievish tricks, madam.

Countess. Fetch me some black patches, Susan.

Sus. There are none in your room, madam ; I'll
 fetch some out of mine. *(Exit Susan into her own
 Room.)*

*(The Countess and the Page remain mute for a considerable time,
 during which the Page looks at the Countess with bashful
 glances :—The Countess pretends not to observe him, and
 yet makes several efforts to suppress her feelings of compassion
 for his situation.)*

Countess. And—and—so—you—you are sorry—
 to leave us ?

Page. Ye—yes,—madam.

Countess. *(Observing the Page's heart so full, that he
 is ready to burst into tears.)* 'Tis that good for-no-
 thing Figaro, who has frighten'd the child with his
 prognosticks.

Page. (*Unable to contain himself any longer.*) N-o-o-o indee-ee-eed, madam ; I-I-am o-on-only-grieved to part from so dear a-la-a-ady.

Countess. Nay, but don't weep, don't weep :—Come, come, be comforted.—(*A knocking at the Chamber door.*) Who's there ?

(*The Count without.*)

Alm. Open the door, my lady.

Countess. Heavens ! it is the Count ! — I am ruin'd ; if he finds the Page here, after receiving Figaro's anonymous letter, I shall be for ever lost ! — What imprudence !

Alm. Why don't you open the door ?

Page. O, ma'am ! —

Countess. Because — I'm alone.

Alm. Alone ! — Whom are you talking to then ?

Countess. To you, to be sure ? — How could I be so thoughtless ? — This villainous Figaro ! —

Page. After the scene of the great chair this morning, he will certainly murder me, if he finds me here.

Countess. Run into my dressing-room : — and, Hannibal, — lock the door on the inside. [*Exit Page into the Dressing-room.*]

The Countess opens the Chamber door.

Enter the Count.

Alm. You did not use to lock yourself in, when you were alone, madam. — Whom were you speaking to ?

Countess. (*Endeavouring to conceal her agitation*) To — to Susan, who is rumaging in her own room.

Alm. You seem agitated, madam.

Countess. That is not impossible ; — (*Affecting to take* —) — we were speaking of you.

“ My wife ? ”

Countess. Your jealousy, your indifference, my lord. (*Noise of a Table overturned by the PAGE in the Dressing-room.*)

Countess. (*Aside.*) What will become of me?

Alm. What noise is that?

Countess. I heard no noise.

Alm. No? You must be most confoundedly absent, then.

Countess. (*Affecting to return his irony.*) O, to be sure.

Alm. There's somebody in your dressing room, madam.

Countess. Who should be there?

Alm. That's what I want to know.

Countess. It's Susan, I suppose, putting the chairs and tables in their places.

Alm. What? Your favourite woman turn'd house maid! You told me just now, she was in her own room.

Countess. In her room, or my room,—it's the same thing.

Alm. Really, my lady, this Susan of yours is a very nimble, convenient, kind of person.

Countess. Really, my lord, this Susan of mine disturbs your quiet very much.

Alm. Very true, madam; so much, that I'm determin'd to see her. (*He goes to the Dressing-room door, and calls.*) Susan, Susan!—If Susan you are, come forth!

Countess. Very well, my lord, very well!—Would you have the girl come out half undress'd? She's trying on one of my left off dresses.—To disturb female privacy in this manner, my lord, is not to be endur'd.

During this altercation, Susan comes out of her own Room, perceives what is passing, and, after listening long enough to know how to act, slips, unseen by both, behind the curtains of the Bed.

Alm. Well,—if she can't come out,—she can answer, at least.—(*Calls.*) Susan!—Answer me, Susan.

Countess. I say, do not answer, Susan: I forbid you to speak a word.—We shall see, whom she'll obey.

Alm. But, if it is nobody, but Susan, what is the reason, madam, of that emotion and perplexity so very evident in your countenance?

Countess. (*Affecting to laugh.*) Emotion and perplexity! Ha! ha! ha!—Ridiculous!

Alm. Be it as ridiculous as it may, I am determin'd to be satisfied; and, I think, present appearances give me a sufficient plea.—(*Goes to the Chamber door, and calls.*) Hollo! Who waits there?

Countess. Do, do, my lord;—expose your jealousy to your very servants! Make yourself and me the jest of the whole world!

Alm. Why do you oblige me to it?—However, since you will not suffer that door to be quietly open'd, will you be pleas'd to accompany me while I procure an instrument to force it.

Countess. To be sure, my lord, to be sure; if you please.

Alm. I shall lock the Chamber-door after me; and, that you may be fully justified, I'll make this other door fast. (*Goes to Susan's Room door; locks it, and takes the key.*) Now, (*Showing the key to the Countess.*) I am sure, nobody can get in or out of this room:—and the Susan of the dressing-room must submit to be confin'd here till my return.

Countess. This behaviour is greatly to your honor my lord! (*Exeunt, disputing, at the Chamber-door, which the Count is heard to lock.*)

Enter SUSAN from behind the bed, as they go off; she runs to the Dressing-room door and calls.

Sus. Hannibal!—Hannibal!—Open the door: quick, quick,—It's I, Susan.

Enter PAGE, frightened.

Page. O, Susan!

Sus. O, my poor mistress!

Page. What will become of her?

Sus. What will become of my marriage?

Page. What will become of me?

Sus. Don't stand babbling here; but fly.

Page. The doors are all fast, how can I fly?

Sus. Don't ask me.—Fly!

Page. Here's a window open: (*Runs to the window.*) Below is a bed of flowers: I'll leap out.

Sus. (*Screams.*) You'll break your neck.

Page. Better that, than ruin my dear lady.—(*Gets upon a Table at the Window.*) Give me one kiss, before I go, Susan.

Sus. Was there ever such a young—(*Page kisses her, and leaps out of the window: Susan shrieks at seeing him jump down.*) Ah!—(*Susan sinks into a chair, overcome with fear:—at last, she takes courage, rises, goes with dread towards the window, and, after looking out, turns round with her hand upon her heart, a sigh of relief, and a smile expressive of sudden ease and pleasure.*) He is safe:—yonder he runs,—as light and as swift as the winds.—If that boy does not make some woman's heart ache, one of these days, I'm mistaken. (*Susan goes in at the Dressing-room door, but peeps back, as she is going to shut it.*) And now, my good jealous Count, perhaps, I may teach you to break open doors another time. (*Locks herself in.*)

Enter the COUNT, at the Chamber door, with a wrenching iron in one hand, and leading in the COUNTESS with the other. Goes and examines Susan's Room door.

Alm. Yes, every thing is as I left it. We now shall come at the truth.—Do you still persist in forcing me to break open this door?—I am determin'd to see who's within.

Countrss. Let me beg, my lord, you'll have a moment's patience:—hear me only, and you shall satisfy your utmost curiosity.—Let me intreat you to be assur'd, that, however appearances may condemn me, no injury was intended to your honour.

Alm. Then there is a man?

Countrss. No,—it is only—only—

Alm. Only,—only who?

Countrss. A child.

Alm. Let's see this child:—What child?

Countrss. Hannibal.

Alm. The Page!—(*Turns away.*) This damnable Page again!—The whole's unravell'd!—Come forth, viper!

Countrss. (*Terrified and trembling.*) Do not let the disorder in which you will see him—

Alm. The disorder!—The disorder!

Countrss. We were going to dress him in women's cloaths for our evening's diversion;—

Alm. I'll rack him!—I'll—I'll make him a terrible example of an injur'd husband's wrath.

Countrss. (*Falling on her knees between the Count and the door.*) Hold, my lord, hold!—Have pity on his youth, his infancy,—

Alm. What! Intercede for him to me?—(*Runs to the Dressing-room door.*) Come forth, I say, once more.—I'll rack him, I'll stab him, I'll—(*While the*

Count is speaking, Susan unlocks the Dressing-room door and bolts out upon him.)

Sus. I'll rack him!—I'll stab him! I'll—Ha, ha, ha!

(The Countess, hearing Susan's voice, recovers sufficiently to look round,—is astonished,—endeavours to collect herself,—and turns back into her former position to conceal her surprise.)

Alm. (After looking first at Susan, and then at the Countess.)—And can you act astonishment too, madam! (Observing the Countess, who cannot totally bide her surprise.)

Countess. I?—My lord,—

Alm. (Recollecting himself.) But, perhaps, she wasn't alone. (Enters the Dressing-room:—the Countess is again alarmed: Susan runs to her.)

Sus. Fear nothing;—he's not there:—He has jump'd out of the window.

Countess. And broke his neck! (Her terror returns.)

Sus. Hush!—(Susan stands before the Countess, to bide her new agitation from the Count.)—Hem! Hem!

Re-enter the COUNT, greatly agitated.

Alm. No, there's nobody there.—I've been confoundedly in the wrong—(Approaching the Countess.) confusion, madam:—Madam,—

(With great submission, as if going to beg her pardon; but the confusion still visible in her countenance, calls up the recollection of all that has just passed, and he bursts out into an exclamation.) Upon my soul, Madam, you are a most excellent actress!

Sus. And am not I too, my lord?

Alm. (Kneels to the Countess.) You see my con—
(Kisses her hand.) Be generous,—

Sus. As you have been.

Alm. Hush!—(Kisses Susan's hand.) Remember

the garden to-night.—(*TURNS TO THE COUNTESS.*) My dear Rosina,—

Countess. No, no, my lord; I am no longer that Rosina, whom you formerly lov'd with such affection:—I am now, nothing but the poor Countess of Almaviva,—a neglected wife, not a belov'd mistress.

Alm. Nay, do not make my humiliation too severe.—But, wherefore have you been thus mysterious on this occasion?

Countess. That I might not betray that headlong thoughtless Figaro.

Alm. What, he wrote the anonymous billet then?

Countess. But it was done, my lord, before I knew of it.

(*The Countess stands in the middle of the stage; the Count a little in the back ground, as if expressive of his timidity, but his countenance shows he is confident of obtaining his pardon;—Susan stands forwarder than either, and her looks are significantly applicable to the circumstances of both parties.*)

Sus. To suspect a man in my lady's dressing-room!—

Alm. And to be thus severely punish'd for my suspicion!—

Sus. Not to believe my lady, when she *affur'd* you, it was her woman!—

Alm. But what's the reason, you malicious little husley, you did not come out when I call'd?

Sus. What, undress'd, my lord?

Alm. But, why didn't you answer then?

Sus. My lady forbad me:—(*Afside.*) and good reason she had so to do.

Alm. How could you, Rosina, be so cruel, as to—

Enter FIGARO, in a hurry,—he stops on seeing the Count, who puts on a very serious air.

Fig. They told me, my lady was indisposed : I ran to enquire, and am very happy to find there was nothing in it.

Alm. You are very attentive.

Fig. It is my duty to be so, my lord.—(*Turns to Susan.*) Come, come, my charmer : prepare for the ceremony : Go to your bridesmaids.

Alm. But who is to take care of the Countess in the mean time ?

Fig. (Surprised.) Take care of her, my lord ! My lady seems very well.

Alm. Who is to guard her from the gallant, who was to profit by my absence ? (*Susan and the Countess make signs to Figaro.*)

Countess. Nay, nay, Figaro ; the Count knows all.

Sus. Yes, yes ; we've told my lord every thing. The jest is ended,—it's all over.

Fig. The jest is ended ?—And it's all over ?

Alm. Yes,—Ended, ended, ended !—And all over !—What have you to say to that ?

Fig. Say, my lord ?

(*The confusion of Figaro arises from not supposing it possible the Countess and Susan should have betrayed him ; and, when he understands something by their signs, from not knowing how much they have told.*)

Alm. Ay, say.

Fig. I—I—I wish I could say as much of my marriage.

Alm. And who wrote the pretty letter ?

Fig. Not I, my lord.

Alm. If I did not know thou liest, I could read it in thy face.

Fig. Indeed, my lord ?—Then it's my face that lies,—not I.

Countess. Pshaw, Figaro ! Why should you endeavour to conceal any thing, when I tell you, we have confess'd all ?

Sus. (Making signs to *Figaro*.) We've told my lord of the letter, which made him suspect that Hannibal, the Page, who is far enough off by this, was hid in my lady's dressing-room, where I myself was lock'd in.

Fig. Well, well; since my lord will have it so, and my lady will have it so, and you all will have it so,—why then, so let it be.

Alm. Still at his wiles.

Countess. Why, my lord, would you oblige him to speak truth, so much against his inclination ?

(*Count* and *Countess* walk familiarly up the stage.)

Sus. Hast thou seen the Page ?

Fig. Yes, yes : you have shook his young joints for him among you.

Enter ANTONIO, the Gardener, half-drunk, with a broken flower-pot under his arm.

Ant. My lord,—my good lord,—if so be as your lordship will not have the goodness to have these windows nail'd up, I shall never have a nosegay fit to give to my lady :—They break all my pots, and spoil my flowers ; for they not only throw other rubbish out of the windows, as they us'd to do, but they have just now toss'd out a man.

Alm. A man !—(*The Count's* suspicions all revive.)

Ant. In white stockings. (*Countess* and *Susan* discover their fears, and make signs to *Figaro* to assist them, if possible.)

Alm. (Eagerly.) Where is the man ?

Ant. That's what I want to know, my lord :—I wish I could find him.—I'm your lordship's gardener ; and, tho' I say it, a better gardener is not

to be found in all Spain :—But, if chamber-maids are permitted to toss men out of the window, to save their own reputation,—what is to become mine?

Fig. Oh fie! What, setting so soon in a morning!

Ant. No,—this is only the remains of last night.

Alm. On with your story, sir—What of the man?—What follow'd?

Ant. I follow'd him myself, my lord, as fast as I could ; but, somehow, I unluckily happen'd to make a false step, and came with such a confounded whirl against the garden-gate,—that I—I quite forgot my errand.

Alm. And should you know this man again?

Ant. To be sure, I should, my lord :—if I had seen his face, that is.

Alm. Either speak more clearly, rascal, or I'll send you packing—

Ant. Send me packing, my lord?—O, no : if your lordship has not enough—enough (*Points to his forehead.*) to know when you have a good gardener; I warrant, I know when I have a good place.

Fig. There is no occasion, my lord, for all this mystery :—It was I who jump'd out of the window into the garden.

Alm. You?

Fig. My own self, my lord.

Alm. Jump out of a one pair of stairs window, and run the risk of breaking your neck?

Fig. The ground was soft, my lord.

Ant. And his neck is in no danger of being broken that way.

Fig. To be sure, I hurt my right leg a little in the fall ; just here at the ancle :—I feel it still.

Alm. But what reason had you to jump out of the window?

Fig. You had receiv'd my letter, my lord,—since I must own it,—and were come, somewhat sooner than I expected, in a dreadful passion, in search of a man ;—

Ant. If it was you, you have grown plaguy fast within this half hour, to my thinking. The man that I saw, did not seem so tall as you, by the head and shoulders.

Fig. Pshaw ! Does not one always double one's self up when one takes a leap ?

Ant. It seem'd a great deal more like the Page.

Alm. The Page !

Fig. O yes, to be sure ! the Page has gallop'd back from Seville, horse and all, to leap out of the window !

Ant. No, no, my lord ; I saw no such thing :—I'll take my oath, I saw no horse leap out of the window.

Alm. Drunkard ! Booby !— (*The Count seizes Antonio, and flings him on the Bed :—he rolls over it, and crawls out, from underneath, in front of it.*)

Fig. Come, come, let us go, and prepare for our sports. [They are all going.]

Ant. Well, since it was you, as I am an honest man, I ought to return you this paper which drop'd out of your pocket, as you fell.

Alm. (*Snatches the paper :—The Countess, Figaro, and Susan are all surprised and embarrassed. Figaro shakes himself, and endeavours to recover his fortitude.*) Now, if it was you, you doubtless can tell what this paper contains, (*Keeps the paper behind his back as he faces Figaro.*) and how it happen'd to come into your pocket ?

Fig. O, my lord, I've such quantities of papers— (*Searches his pockets, and pulls out a great many.*) No, it is not this :—Hem !—This is a double love-letter from Marcelina, in seven pages :—Hem !—Hem !—

It would do a man's heart good to read it.—Hem!—And this is a petition from the poor poacher in prison: I never presented it to your lordship, because, I know, you have affairs much more serious on your hands, than the complaints of such half-starv'd rascals.—Ah!—Hem!—This—this—no, this is an inventory of your lordship's sword-knots, ruffs, ruffles, and roses:—Must take care of this—(*Endeavours to gain time, and keeps glancing and hemming to Susan and the Countess, to look at the paper, and give him a hint.*)

Alm. It is neither this, nor this, nor that, nor t'other, that you have in your hand, but what I hold here in mine, that I want to know the contents of. (*Holds out the paper in action as he speaks; the Countess, who stands next him, catches a sight of it*)

Countess. (*Aside to Susan.*) 'Tis the Commission.

Sus. (*Aside to Figaro.*) The Page's Commission.

Alm. Well, sir;—so you know nothing of the matter?

Ant. There,—my lord says, you know nothing of the matter.

Fig. Keep off, and don't come to whisper me.—
[*He pushes Antonio out at the Chamber-door.*] O, lord! lord! [*Pretending to recollect himself.*] What a stupid fool I am!—I declare, it's the commission of that poor youth, Hannibal,—which I, like a blockhead, forgot to return him:—he'll be quite unhappy about it, poor boy.

Alm. And how came you by it?

Fig. By it, my lord?

Alm. Why did he give it you?

Fig. To—to—to—

Alm. To what?

Fig. To get—

Alm. To get what? It wants nothing.

Countess. (*Aside to Susan.*) It wants the seal.

Sus. (*Aside to Figaro.*) It wants the seal.

Fig. O, my lord, what it wants, to be sure, is a mere trifle.

Alm. What trifle?

Fig. You know, my lord, when you make out a commission, it's customary to—

Alm. To what?

Fig. To affix your lordship's seal.

Alm. (*Looks at the Commission, finds the seal is wanting, and exclaims with vexation and disappointment.*) The devil and all his imps!

[*Exit Count at the Chamber door.*

Fig. Are you going, my lord, without giving orders for our wedding?

[*Exit Figaro, following the Count.*

Sus. What shall we do now, madam? The Page is too much frighten'd, ever to be employ'd in a second plot.

Countess. No more plots of Figaro's inventing! You see into what danger I've been brought by his fine concerted letter.—Still, however, I wish I could convict my false husband of his infidelity to his face.—Ha! a happy thought strikes me: I'll meet him in the garden, instead of you; and then nobody will be expos'd but himself.—But you must not mention one word of this, Susan, to any body.

Sus. Except Figaro?

Countess. No, not even to Figaro:—he'll spoil my design by mixing some plot of his own with it.

Sus. Your project's a charming one, madam; and I shall yet have my Figaro.

[*Exeunt at the Chamber-door.*

ACT III.

SCENE,

*The Garden of the Castle.**Two Pavilions, one on each side of the Stage.**Enter AGNES, from the Bottom of the Garden, with a little Basket of refreshments in her hand.*

Agn. NOW for that good-natur'd, merry, little Hannibal :—he hasn't half learnt me my part yet.— Poor thing, he has had nothing to eat since he came ; and the cross, good-for-nothing, cook would not give me a morsel for him ; so I was obliged to ask the butler for some cakes and oranges :—It cost me a good kiss on the cheek ; but I know who'll repay it. —Hannibal,—Hannibal!—He's not there sure.— O, dear, and here's somebody coming !—

[Exit Agnes into the Pavilion on the left.]

FIGARO advances, disguised in a Rocquelaure, with BASIL, and PEDRO.—Figaro, at first, believes Agnes to be Susan ; and, as it is too dark to see, endeavours to follow the sound of her voice, having entered while she was speaking.

Fig. I was mistaken ; 'tis Agnes.—What o'clock is it ?

Ped. Almost near the moon's rising.

Bas. What a gloomy night !—We look like so many conspirators.

Fig. You understand, gentlemen, why you come hither: It is, to be witnessess of the conduct of the virtuous bride I am soon to espouse, and of the honourable lord who has graciously bestow'd her on me. You'll see, my suspicions are not without cause.

Bas. Ay; and I shall be up with my lord now, for not employing me in this assignation. [Basil and Pedro retire.]

Fig. No, my very worthy lord and master, you have not got her yet.—What, because you're a great man, you fancy yourself a great genius!—But, as little a man as I may, perhaps, be reveng'd on you.—O, Susan! Susan!— (Hearing a noise, he wraps himself up in his roquelaure, and retires a little.)

Enter softly, from the Bottom of the Garden, the Countess and Susan, both veiled.

Sus. [Aside to the Countess.] So, so,—in spite of all our secrecy, Figaro has somehow or other discover'd our intention, and will be here. But I'll teach him how to suspect me, I warrant.—Now, let us begin.—[Speaks louder.] If you don't want me, madam, I'll walk, and enjoy the fresh air.

Fig. [Aside.] O, the cocatrice!

Countess. It may give thee cold.

Sus. O no, my lady.

Fig. [Aside] O no; she'll not take cold to-night. [Susan retires a little towards the Pavilion on the left.]

Enter the PAGE, from the Bottom of the Garden.

Page. [Seeing the Countess.] Is that Agnes yonder? (He approaches her.) No:—Surely, it's Susan:—it must be Susan.—(Comes up, and takes hold of the Countess's hand) Ah, my dear Susan!

Countess. Let me go. (In a feigned voice.)

Page. Come, Susan, Susan, don't be so coy :—I know, it isn't Figaro you're waiting for, it is my lord the Count.—What ! Didn't I hear this morning, when I was behind the great chair ?

Sus. [Aside.] The babbling little villain !

Enter the Count, from the Bottom of the Garden.

Alm. Is not that somebody with Susan ?—(Advances close up to them, and draws back in a fury.)—'Tis that infernal Page again. (Susan keeps out of the way, silently laughing.)

Page. 'Tis in vain, to say, no :—Since thou art going to be the representative of the Countess, I am determin'd to give thee one kiss for thyself, and a hundred for thy beauteous lady.

(The Countess draws back, to avoid being kissed by the Page ; the Count advances into her place ; the Page, taking the Count's hand, perceives he is discovered, and suddenly retreats, crying in an under voice.)

Page. O, the Devil !—The Count again !

[Exit Page into the Pavilion on the left. While this passes, Figaro has advanced to drive the Page from Susan, as he supposes)

Alm. (Thinking he speaks to the Page.) Since you are so fond of kissing, take that. (Gives Figaro a box on the ear.)

Fig. I've paid for listening. (Susan cannot contain herself, but bursts out a laughing.)

Alm. (Hears her laugh.) What, do such salutations make the impudent rascal laugh ?

Fig. [aside.] It would be strange, if he should cry this time.

(Count and Countess approach each other.)

Alm. But, let us not lose the precious moments, my charming Susan !—Let these kisses speak my passion ! (Kisses the Countess.)

Fig. (Aside, and beating his forehead.) Oh ! Oh ! Oh !

Alm. Why dost thou tremble ?

Countess. (Continuing her feigned voice.) Because I am afraid,—

Alm. Thou seem'st to have a cold. (*Takes the Countess's hand between his own, and kisses it.*) What a sweet, delicate, angel's hand !—How smooth and soft !—How long and small the fingers !—What pleasure in the touch !—Ah ! How different is this from the Countess's hand !—

Countess. (Sighing.) And yet you lov'd her once.

Alm. Yes,—yes,—I did so :—But three years of better acquaintance, have made the marriage-state so respectable—Besides, wives think to ensure our fidelity by being always wives :—whereas, they should sometimes become——

Countess. What ?

Alm. Our mistresses.—I hope, thou'l not forget this lesson.

Countess. O, no, indeed; not I.

Sus. (Aloud.) Nor I.

Fig. (Aloud.) Nor I.

Alm. (Astonished.) Are there echoes here ?

Countess. O, yes.

Alm. And now, my sweet Susan, receive the portion I promis'd thee : (*Gives her a purse, and puts a ring upon her finger.*)—And continue likewise to wear this ring for my sake.

Countess. Susan accepts your favors.

Fig. (Aside.) Was there ever so faithless a hussey !

Sus. (Aside.) These riches are all for us ! (*Still keeps chuckling very heartily at what is going forward.*)

Countess. I perceive torches.

Alm. They are preparatory to thy nuptials. (*The Countess pretends to be afraid.*) Come, come, let us retire for a moment into the pavilion.

Countess. What! in the dark?

Alm. Why not? There are no spirits.

Fig. (Aside.) Yes, but they are; and evil ones too.

(*Countess follows the Count.*) She is going!—Hem!

(*Figaro bows in a great passion.*)

Alm. (Raising his voice majeſterially.) Who goes there?

Fig. A man.

Alm. (Aside to the Countess) It's Figaro. (*The Countess enters the Pavilion on the right hand, and the Count retires.*)

Fig. (Desperate.) They're gone in.—(*Walks about.*) Let her go,—let her go!

Sus. (Aside.) Thou shalt pay presently for these fine suspicions. (*Susan advances and mimicks the voice of the Countess.*) Who is that?

Fig. [Aside.] 'Tis the Countess.—What lucky chance conducted you hither, madam?—You know not what scenes are this moment transacting.

Sus. O yes, but I do, Figaro.

Fig. What, that the Count and my very virtuous bride are this moment in yonder pavilion, madam?

Sus. (Aside.) Very well, my gentleman!—I know more than thou dost.

Fig. And will you not be reveng'd?

Sus. O yes; we always have our revenge in our own power.

Fig. (Aside.) What does she mean? Perhaps, what I suspect.—That would be a glorious retaliation.—(*To Susan.*) There is no means but one, madam, of revenging such wrongs; and that now presents itself.

Sus. (Aside.) What does the good-for-nothing fellow mean? (*Speaks in a tone of compliance to Figaro.*) Does it, Figaro?

Fig. Pardon my presumption, madam: on any other occasion, the respect I bear your ladyship

would keep me silent ; but, on the present, I dare encounter all. (*Falls on his knees.*) O, excuse, forgive me, madam :—Let not the precious moments slip ! Giant me your hand.

Sus. (*Unable any longer to contain herself, gives him a slap on the face.*) Take it !

Fig. I have it, I think.—The devil ! This is the day of stripes.

Sus. Susan gives it thee ! (*As soon as Figaro bears it is Susan, his satisfaction is so extreme, that he laughs very heartily all the while she beats him.*) And that, and that, and that, and that for thy insolence ; —and that for thy jealousy ;— and that for thy infidelity. (*Susan out of breath, Figaro still laughing.*)

Fig. O happy Figaro !—Take thy revenge, my dear, kind, good angel ; never did man or martyr suffer with such extacy.

Sus. Don't tell me of your extacy ! How durst you, you good for nothing, base, talie-hearted, man, make love to me, supposing me the Countess.—But I'll be reveng'd.

F.g. Talk not of revenge, my love ; but, tell me, what blest angel sent thee hither ; and how—

Sus. Know, to thy confusion, that I and my lady, coming here to catch one fox, have entrapp'd two.

Fig. But who has entrapp'd the other poor fox ?

Sus. Why, his own wife.

Fig. His wife ?— Go, hang thyself, Figaro, for wanting the wit to divine this plot !—And has all this intriguing been only about his own wife, after all ?

COUNT advances from behind.

Alm. 'St—'st ! Susan !—Susan !

Fig. (*Aside to Susan.*) There's my Lord.—A thought strikes me.—'Pr'ythee second me, Susan.

(Speaks in a feigned voice, falls on his knees, and kisses Susan's hand.)—Ah, madam, let us not longer converse of love, but enjoy its treasures.

Alm. (Aside.) What's here? A man on his knees to the Countess!—(Feels for his sword: Figaro and Susan silently laughing.) and I unarm'd!

Fig. Quickly then, madam, let us repair the wrong which love this morning suffer'd by the impertinent intrusion of your lord.

Alm. This is not to be borne. (Darts between them, seizes Figaro by the collar, while Susan escapes into the pavilion on the left.)—Villain!—

Fig. (Pretends amazement.) My lord!

Alm. How, rascal! And, is it you?—Holloa—Holica—Who hears me?—Where are my people? Lights, lights!—

Enter four Servants with Flambeaux—PEDRO and BASIL advance.

Alm. (To the Servants.) Guard all the passages, and seize this fellow.

Fig. You command with absolute authority over all present, my lord; except yourself.

Alm. Now, sir,—be pleas'd to declare before this company, who the—the—woman is, that just now ran into that pavilion.

Fig. Into that—(Going towards the Pavilion on the right.)

Alm. (Stopping him.) No, prevaricating fiend; into that. (Pointing to the other.)

Fig. Ah, that alters the case.

Alm. Answer, or—

Fig. The lady,—is a young lady, to whom my lord once paid his addresses; but who, happening to love me better than my betters, has this day given me the preference.

Alm. The preference?—The preference?—'Tis too true.—Yes, gentlemen, what he confesses, I give you my honour, I just now heard from the very mouth of his accomplice.

Baz. His accomplice!

Alm. Come forth, madam!—(*Enters the Pavilion on the left.*)—Come forth, I say, show yourself.

(*Enter, dragging out the PAGE, still speaking, and not looking at him till he gets on a line with the rest of the Company.*)

Omnès. The Page!

Alm. Again, and again, and everlastingly, this damn'd diabolical Page!—(*PAGE flies to the other side of the stage.*) You shall find, however, he was not alone.

Page. Ah, no! My lot would have been hard indeed, then.

Alm. Enter, Pedro, and drag the guilty wretch before her judge. (*PEDRO goes into the Pavilion on the left.*)

Ped. Come, madam, you must come out; I must not let you go, since my lord knows you are here.

Enter PEDRO bringing out AGNES.

Omnès. Agnes! Ha! ha! ha!

Alm. I'll find her, I warrant. Where is this daughter of infamy, who thus evades my just fury?

Enter SUSAN, with her Fan before her face, from the Pavilion on the left..

Here she comes, at last; proving her own shame and my dishonour. (*Susan kneels to him, still hiding her face.*)

Omnès. Pardon, pardon, gracious lord!

Alm. No! No! No! (*They all fall on their knees.*)
No! No! Were the whole world to kneel, I would
be deaf.

*Enter the Countess, from the Pavilion on the right,
and kneels to the Count, whose back is turned to
her:*

Countess. Let me, my lord, make one of the num-
ber.

(*SUSAN drops her fan;—the Count hears the voice of the
Countess, looks round, and suddenly conceives the whole trick
they have been playing him. All the Company burst into a
laugh; the Count's shame, confusion, &c.)*

Alm. (With great humility.) And—is it you, ma-
dam?

Countess. (Inclines herself, in token of affirmation.)

Alm. (Returning her bow with great confusion.) Ah!—Yes!—Yes! A generous pardon—tho' un-
merited.—

Countess. Were you in my place, you would ex-
claim, No! No! No!—but I grant it, without a
single stipulation.

Sus. And I.

Fig. And I.—There are echoes here.

Alm. (Surprised.) I perceive,—I perceive:—I have
been rightly serv'd.

Countess. Here, Susan, here is the purse and ring,
which my lord gave thee. He will remember thy
sweet delicate fingers, so long and so small.

Sus. Thank your lordship.—Here Figaro: (*Gives
him the Purse.*)

Fig. It was devilish hard to get at.

Alm. Pray, how did your valour like the box on
the ear I gave you just now?

Page. (With his hand to his Sword.) Me, my co-
lonel?

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